

THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management

Precipitation Data Found on SWC MapServices

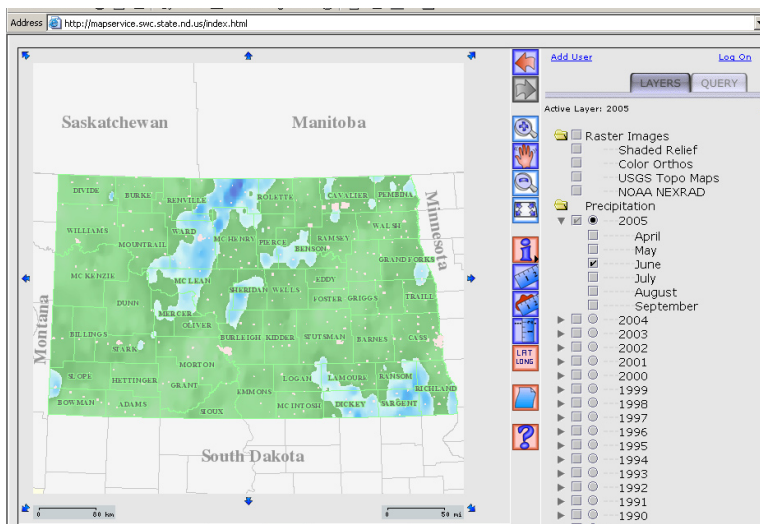
By Daniel Brothers

At the beginning of April the Atmospheric Resource Board Cooperative Observer Network (ARBCON) began its 30th year of collecting rain and hail information in North Dakota. For several years now this information has been available over the internet for public use, but now it is easier to access than ever before.

In the March issue of *North Dakota Water* the State Water Commission introduced SWC MapServices, its new web-based mapping system. Among the plethora of available information on MapServices is the ARBCON precipitation data.

A person can quickly get an estimate of monthly precipitation for any point in North Dakota by clicking on the year and month desired and then clicking on any location on the map. Estimates of precipitation for the entire growing season are also available. You can find precipitation for any year and month available by clicking on the folder labeled precipitation on the right-hand side of the screen. Once you find the year you're looking for click on the arrow next to the year and a list of available months will appear for you to choose from.

If you are more interested in the actual rainfall data from a specific site you can show the location of the observation sites used in the precipitation network. Under the folder



June 2005 Precipitation from SWC's MapServices.

labeled SWC Water Data is a layer called precipitation sites. This will show the location of every site that has contributed to ARBCON over the years. Once this layer has been activated you can click on any of the sites on the map and a screen will pop up showing the monthly rainfall that has been reported at that site. Further, if you click on any of those months MapServices will show you the daily reports for that month.

MapServices will also allow you to select a group of sites in a desired area by drawing a box or polygon around them. A list of the sites in the given area will appear showing their location by township, range, and section, whether the site is active or inactive, and in what county the site is located. You can then select whichever site you choose and look at the monthly or daily rainfall totals.

Another way a person can access the information available on the network is to search for information using the Query tool. The Query tab is located near the upper right corner

of the screen. This will allow a person to search through the ARBCON database by Site ID, location, or county. Query will bring up the information for all sites that match the given search.

ARBCON also introduced internet reporting for precipitation observers this year, making some observations available sooner than was previously possible. Since SWC MapServices uses data directly from the ARBCON database,

these reports become available on the internet almost immediately after they have been reported.

One final precipitation feature has been incorporated. It is now possible for a user to display Doppler radar images from the National Weather Service. This feature is accessible through the top folder labeled Raster Images and clicking on NOAA NEXRAD.

The State Water Commission MapServices is available at www.swc.state.nd.us. If you would like more information on ARBCON or you would like to become a volunteer you can call our office at 701-328-2788 or e-mail us at dabrothers@state.nd.us.

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